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Sen. Brown's legislation creating Purple Heart Trail in Branch County headed for Senate vote

LANSING – Legislation introduced by state Sen. Cameron S. Brown, R- Fawn River Township, designating the portion of I-69 running through Branch County as the “Purple Heart Trail” was unanimously voted out of the Senate Committee on Senior Citizens and Veterans Affairs Wednesday.

“I’m pleased to be able to honor those who have served and shed blood for our country,” Brown said. The Purple Heart Medal, created by George Washington, and originally known as the Badge of Merit, is awarded for wounds or death in combat. The Purple Heart Trail begins near Mt. Vernon, Washington’s home and Sen. Brown’s childhood backyard. “I grew up near Mt. Vernon,” said Brown, “and so this designation has special meaning to me.”

Senate Bill 1243 would amend the Michigan Memorial Highway Act to designate the portion of I-69 located in Branch County as the Purple Heart Trail. Brown was approached by the Military Order of the Purple Heart to introduce the legislation.

“Introducing this bill in honor of Purple Heart veterans was a great privilege,” Brown said. “I am honored they asked me to introduce this bill. This is a special opportunity to acknowledge veterans who served so honorably and sacrificed so much for our country.”

Branch County veteran Ronald Paul, Sergeant at Arms for the State Military Order of the Purple Heart, added “this doesn’t only apply to us living with battle wounds, but also takes in those who are deceased. This is a great memorial for them.”

The Michigan Department of Transportation has specific guidelines for memorials of this type. Highway designations must be named in a bill passed by the Legislature and signed into law by the governor.

SB 1243 is expected to come up for a full vote on the Senate floor this fall.

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